



## **Environment Rating Scale – Local Modifications**

A workgroup of California's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Consortia Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Anchors came together on May 27–29, 2015, to share their experiences working with the ERS tools. At that meeting, local consortia Anchors shared consortium-specific modifications to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) tool as described below. First 5 California (F5CA) Master Anchors do not train on or certify using local modifications.

### **Space and Furnishings**

#### **1. Indoor space**

5.1 San Diego assessors do not consider the overall space or napping capacity of the room when determining whether there is ample space; they only consider the amount of room in centers for the maximum number of children enrolled.

#### **7. Space for gross motor play**

5.2 In San Francisco, where providers regularly have to use public playgrounds or roof-top playgrounds, assessors base “easily accessible” on observed difficulty for children to get to and from the playground. If the children present are able to get to and from the space with relative ease, it is acceptable.

### **Personal Care Routines**

#### **10. Meals and snacks**

Two counties have local modifications to meals and snacks scoring:

- 3.3 San Diego assessors require 10 seconds of hand washing (the previous time criteria from ERSI).
- 7.1 San Diego assessors look for three things children do to assist with meals and snacks in order to give credit for children helping (set table, pass food, etc.).
- 7.2 Orange assessors will give credit if child-sized serving utensils are used or if the meal does not require any serving utensils.

#### **11. Nap**

1.2 San Francisco assessors require mats to have at least 18” on 3 sides.

### **Language – Reasoning**

#### **15. Books and pictures**

5.4 Four counties have local modifications to the ECERS indicator requiring all books to be “appropriate for the children in group,” including:

- Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) assessors consider books to be inappropriate if they show the intent to harm, threaten, or scare (e.g., images portraying an aggressive stance, and/or the contextual representation of violence or aggression within accessible books and language materials). If a teacher provides appropriate discussion and guidance about the violent or frightening content of a book, it is credited as being appropriate; if it is left for children to find without teacher guidance, it is considered inappropriate.

LAUP assessors do not consider magazines and/or items not meant for reading by/to children in scoring of this item.

- Orange county assessors do not consider violence in the determination of “appropriate.”
- San Diego assessors do not consider fairy tales and animals bearing teeth as inappropriate, but illustrations of animals eating their prey are considered inappropriate. Violence is inappropriate if the subject is using actual weapons of violence or is showing blood and gore. Violent language is not considered, only images.
- San Francisco added a question for assessors to ask teachers, “I see you have [book title]. How do you introduce books with violent content to children before they are put on the bookshelf?” Determination of appropriateness is based on answer given.

## **Activities**

### **22. Blocks**

5.3 Three counties shared local modifications to the ECERS indicator about materials in the block area, including:

- San Francisco and LAUP assessors look at how blocks and other items are used and stored. If there are other materials in the block area, San Francisco and LAUP assessors observe to see if the materials interfere with or prohibit block play. The interference of materials must be observed to deny credit.
- Orange County assessors are considering a modification to the prohibition of other materials in the block area because the county specifically promotes Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), which encourages teachers to integrate ramps and other materials with blocks. These could be interpreted by ERSI as interfering with a “special block area.”

## **24. Dramatic play**

5.1 Two counties have local modifications to the ECERS indicator about dress-up clothing, including:

- When LAUP assessors document dress-up clothing, examples must be unique and cannot include all the same clothing type (e.g. all ties). LAUP does not count community helper dress-up clothing to meet the gender-specific requirement.
- San Francisco assessors do not assign gender to any materials; however, the classroom must have variety of types of clothing (e.g. not all ties).

## **27. Use of TV, video, and/or computers**

3.3 Three counties have local modifications to the ECERS indicator limiting time children are allowed to use TV, video, and/or computers, including:

- San Diego assessors allow children to use TV/SMART boards for up to 20 minutes/day (previous ERSI time limit).
- LAUP assessors define screen time as visual engagement with any media screen device. Onlookers are included in calculating screen time as it applies to the maximum daily and weekly time limits.
- Orange assessors do not consider time spent viewing video clips and SMART boards if they are incorporated into a routine (similar to how a flannel board would be used).

## **28. Promoting acceptance of diversity**

Some counties have local modifications to the ECERS indicator about promoting acceptance of diversity (county names were not recorded during meeting).

- 3.1 and 5.1 Assessors in some counties allow family photos showing diverse families, to be counted towards meeting relevant categories of diversity.
- 5.1 San Francisco assessors do not consider gender as a required diversity category.

## **Interaction**

## **31. Discipline**

3.1 LAUP assessors do not allow any use of “time out,” regardless of age or how it is carried out.

## **Program Structure**

### **34. Schedule**

3.3 Three counties have local modifications to the ECERS indicator limiting time children are allowed to use TV, video, and/or computers, including:

- LAUP assessors automatically apply “weather permitting” when there is an active precipitation or a weather advisory.
- Fresno assessors allow “spare the air” days and air quality advisories as a “weather permitting” event, for which providers are allowed to keep children inside.
- El Dorado assessors only consider “weather permitting” when there is a substantial amount of snow and children cannot go outside and use the outdoor equipment.